

THE BIRDS OF A MANITOBA GARDEN

BY

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IN this article the author has shown the beauty of a flower and bird garden combined. Our insectivorous birds are worth protecting and their beauty of song and colour would improve your garden. Much valuable bird life is being saved to-day by the enforcement of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which is administered by the Dominion Parks Branch, Department of the Interior, Ottawa. You can help by protecting the birds on your premises.

The garden to which this article refers, is a country one. It was originally an old cattle yard, situated in a very sandy locality upon a hill. When first ploughed and prepared for its present use, the land was laid out to include an area of approximately 270 feet by 250 feet. Within this space, but around the edges, were planted spruce intermixed with poplar, elm and ash, while inside of these, various shrubs, such as lilac, caragana, and honeysuckle, several of which are berry bearing. These plants have all grown well so that there is now sufficient shelter to accommodate even such shade-loving birds as the Catbird. The middle portion of the garden is devoted to herbaceous plants, many of which represent crosses or "new creations," originated by my brother Stuart. The whole area is surrounded by a fence built to keep out cattle, but not poultry or dogs. Cats being recognized as one of the chief enemies of birds, are rigidly exterminated.

The bird visitors of this garden are naturally numerous, especially during the seasons of migration. At these times the underbrush is flooded with such species as Tree Sparrows, White-throats, Harris' Sparrow and Juncos; to say nothing of a host of others occurring more sparingly. Most of these are but passing visitors, however, whereas I intend, in this article, to confine myself to breeding birds which have actually made their homes within, or upon the fence. I say upon the fence advisedly because it is there that are placed several boxes with holes of appropriate size to accommodate various feathered friends.

The boxes proved a success from the start. One near the gate, a square one about a foot in height, and four by five inches inside, has been the home of no less than three species. The first to take possession were a pair of Bluebirds, and who could wish for more beautiful tenants. The male came first upon the scene and sang his quaint but sweet song for at least a week before his less brightly coloured mate